DEVELOPING ADAPTIVE LEADERS, A CULTURAL IMPERATIVE

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DEVELOPING ADAPTIVE LEADERS, A CULTURAL IMPERATIVE

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ABSTRACT

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The Army initiated transformation as a response to the demands and requirements of the 21st Century operational environment. One of the key factors of this new operational environment is the nature of our adversaries, often described as asymmetric. Asymmetric adversaries pose unique challenges to the Army and exhibit the ability to very rapidly make changes and adapt to our operations. Because of this, the ability of Army leaders to be adaptive and to build adaptive units is more important than ever. This paper explores the concept of adaptive performance by examining how current Army doctrine addresses this concept. The paper then analyzes current research into the nature of adaptive performance and how to develop it in others. It concludes by examining organizational and cultural factors that affect adaptive performance. Throughout, recommendations are offered for how the Army should alter its leader development program to better prepare adaptive leaders.

DEVELOPING ADAPTIVE LEADERS, A CULTURAL IMPERATIVE

Much has been written over the last several years about the need for adaptive and agile leaders as the Army continues to undergo transformation. Army transformation resulted from an examination of the current and future anticipated operational environment to determine the nature of our future adversaries and the expected roles, capabilities, and missions the Army would be expected to perform. From this, the Army designed more deployable, modular formations with new and improved capabilities with a goal of also developing adaptive Soldiers and leaders who possess a joint and expeditionary mindset. This requirement to develop adaptive Soldiers leads to three questions: 1. What were the changes within the operational environment that drove Army transformation? 2. Has the nature of the operational environment changed since the inception of Army transformation? 3. Why is there now so much attention focused on the requirement for the Army to develop adaptive leaders?

This paper focuses on the importance of adaptability in both Army leaders and units by first examining the nature of the current and future operational environment. Next, the paper examines existing research in adaptability to better understand its components or nature, and examines whether and how adaptability can be developed in leaders. Lastly it examines those aspects of command climate and organizational culture that can facilitate or hinder adaptive performance. The goal of this analysis is a better understanding of the nature of adaptability to see if current and future Army efforts at increasing the emphasis on adaptability in its leader development programs are on track. The other goal is to make recommendations for the Army's strategic

leaders to drive required change toward more adaptive performance based on current

research, recommendations from practitioners, and my personal beliefs.

Changes in the Operational Environment

William S Lind, Keith Nightengale, and John Schmitt developed a theory of fourth

generation warfare (4GW) that aptly describes the nature of our current threats and our

expected future threats.[1]   Lind et al. describe 4GW as a qualitative change in the

nature of war. In 4GW, there are less state-on-state wars, and a return to conflicts

between differing cultures, religions, and ideologies.   The actors in 4GW are often

difficult to discern because they often do not represent the traditional military of an

opposing state. 4GW is a strategy of waging war between a weaker opponent and a

stronger opponent, usually a nation-state. Characteristics of 4GW include asymmetry of

opponents in terms of materiel resources and technologies; a blurring between political

ends and the means of waging war; a blurring between the tactical, operational, and

strategic levels of war; decentralized operations; less traditional force-on-force,

maneuver-centric operations; non-linear operations; increased use of psychological

operations against opposing forces, and their military and political leaders; manipulation

of the media; and lastly, propaganda, terror, confusion, and deception.[2]

Initially in 4GW, the lesser opponent is best advised to not initially try to impose

rule or use overt force, but to disorganize, disrupt, and delegitimize the stronger

opponent. During this stage, the weaker opponent attempts to force the stronger

opponent to expend resources in a strategy of attrition with the hopes of the stronger

opponent responding in a heavy-handed manner to incidents, provoking negative

reaction and negative will against the stronger opponent. It is here that the lesser

opponent then attempts to capitalize on psychological operations and its manipulation of the media to attract further supporters to its cause.

There are three components for those who wage 4GW war: physical combat, mental factors, and moral factors. Physical combat is the least important and the mental and moral components consisting of the will to fight, the belief in the justness of the cause, and the belief in victory are paramount. Fourth generation warriors are not constrained by the legal and ethical constraints often imposed on western nations engaged in warfare. In fact, these warriors intentionally attempt to exploit international mores and the transparent nature of western democracies to their advantage. An example of this is the use of human shields that occurs periodically. 4GW emphasizes different centers of gravity than more traditional theories of war. Religion, nationality, family, tribe, clan, and will can all potentially be centers of gravity for practitioners of 4GW. Insurgencies are an example of a 4GW.

4GW is so compelling as a construct for the nature and character of war because it very aptly describes the nature of our current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and many believe it is likely to be the nature of our conflicts in the near future.

Another construct used to describe our expected threats in the future is described in Joint Vision (JV) 2020 as asymmetric threats[3]. JV 2020 predicts that our adversaries will continue to adapt to our capabilities and take advantage of existing and emerging technologies to counter our superior conventional and nuclear capabilities. JV 2020 expects our enemies to continue to use asymmetric approaches to conflict that avoid our strengths, while exploiting our vulnerabilities. JV 2020 also identifies these asymmetric approaches as most dangerous to the United States and its armed forces.

What is common then between 4GW and asymmetric war is an enemy that is very adaptive and creative. All this leads to a very volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous operational environment for the 21st century[4]. Especially as it relates to uncertainty, leaders who are adaptable are better suited for the demands of the current and future operational environment.

The Importance of Adaptability

Critical to the success of preparing for these new threats are adaptive and agile leaders and units. As the Army began modular transformation, it conducted the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP)[5]. Part of the charter of the ATLDP was to examine the Army's leader development system to see if the Army was achieving the desired effects of preparing leaders for full spectrum operations in the 21st century. Mid-grade leaders reported an Army culture out of balance. Respondents reported excessive operational tempos that often detracted from leader development. Training often was dictated top down offering very little opportunity for subordinate leaders to assess, plan, and execute their own training. Perceptions of micromanagement and a zero defects culture were rampant and there was a lack of adequate senior leader mentorship reported, as well as insufficient time allowed in key and developmental jobs. The study showed that although leaders required a certain set of knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform across the spectrum of conflict, these leaders were not receiving sufficient opportunities both within the institutional Army and the operational Army to develop those knowledge, skills, and abilities. Part of the shortcomings of the ATLDP I believe is that it did not address the importance of developing and improving adaptability in the operational domain of leader development.

The findings of the ATLDP were at odds with the Army's underlying cultural assumptions and our doctrine of mission orders, the role of commander's intent and initiative in both training and combat operations, decentralized execution, and the acceptance of risk within organizations. The ATLDP made several recommendations, and recognized both self-awareness and adaptability as enduring competencies of effective leaders.

After six years of sustained combat against both insurgent and terrorist networks, the Army as an institution recognizes the importance of adaptability against an enemy that is very adaptive and who continually seeks novel, asymmetric means to defeat us. Our leaders and organizations have to be adaptive in this environment. In fact, some authors argue that the Army's best advantage against this type of adversary will be its ability to learn and adapt faster than the enemy[6].

Improving the Army's adaptive capacity is critical for its future success because the Army recognizes that it is currently in a state of persistent conflict[7]. Chief of Staff of the Army General Casey and others describe a future of persistent conflict fueled by Islamic extremism, globalization, competition for energy, and climate change where our enemies employ asymmetric means to defeat the United States[8]. In General Casey's August 14th, 2007 address to the national press club, he stated that our current and future force and its leaders must be adaptive and be able to operate in an uncertain environment. General Casey called for organizational, as well as educational and training changes to produce more agile and adaptive leaders[9].

So, six years after the publication of the ATLDP, three years into modular transformation, and after six years of conflict, the Army's senior leader and many other

Army leaders recognize that more needs to be done to produce more adaptive and agile leaders and units.

Current Doctrine on Adaptability

Several Army documents address the importance of adaptability or the related concept of agility. Army Field Manual (FM) 6-22 discusses mental agility as a "flexibility of mind, a tendency to anticipate or adapt to uncertain or changing situations"[10]. Mental agility also has a time component associated with it. It implies an ability to rapidly assess a situation and devise alternatives. According to FM 6-22, mental agility allows leaders to deal with changing environments and better identify second and third order effects of leader decisions. Mental agility requires critical reasoning. FM 6-22 also addresses innovation. Although this FM addresses what mental agility is and other factors related to adaptive performance and agility and why it is important, it does not adequately address how to develop it in oneself or subordinates.

Army FM 7-0, Training the Force, discusses the importance of developing adaptive performance in junior leaders:

> Commanders train and develop adaptive leaders and units. Repetitive, standards-based training provides relevant experience. Commanders intensify training experiences by varying training conditions. Training experiences coupled with timely feedback builds competence. Competence, confidence, and discipline promote initiative and enable leaders to adapt to changing situations and conditions.[11]

The FM also states that adaptive leaders understand their environment, recognize changes in the environment, and learn how to adapt in order to succeed. This discussion provides some guidance to leaders for developing adaptive performance in others but is still insufficient.

Army FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency includes the following passage:

open channels of discussion and debate are needed to encourage growth of a learning environment in which experience is rapidly shared and lessons adapted for new challenges. The speed with which leaders adapt the organization must outpace enemy efforts to identify and exploit weaknesses[12].

The Army acknowledges the importance of adaptive performance in several of its doctrinal publications and there is ample anecdotal evidence of its importance. In a recent interview LTG Caldwell stated, "I watched our leaders in Iraq, what I saw was, those who were most successful were those who were very adaptive and creative"[13]. The Army though only provides a partial definition of adaptive performance. It does not adequately define this complex behavior, nor address training or educational strategies for senior leaders to develop it in others or units/organizations.

Defining Adaptive Performance

Adaptive performance is an effective change in response to an altered situation[14]. Adaptive performance requires a change in behavior. Susan White, Rose Mueller-Hanson, David Dorsey & Elaine Pulakos note that although there are several definitions of adaptive performance, the Army has not developed its own definition and that little work has been done on understanding its dimensions. These authors also contend that although the Army has identified adaptive performance as a critical trait of leaders and organizations, the knowledge of how to train, develop, educate, and enhance it for both individuals and organizations is not well established.

Research on Adaptability

White et al. developed an eight dimension model of adaptive performance shown in Table 1.

Component	Definition

adaptive performance in handling emergencies/crises	acts decisively, cool under pressure, serves as a calming influence
adaptive performance in dealing with work stress	develops adaptive coping strategies to deal with stress
adaptive performance in solving problems creatively	solves ill-defined and complex problems
adaptive performance in dealing with uncertain or unpredictable work environments	makes adjustments due to unforeseen changes
adaptive performance in learning work tasks, technologies, and procedures	anticipates, prepares for and learns required new skills
interpersonal adaptability	adjusts individual style to achieve team or cooperative goals
cultural adaptability	modifies individual style based on an appreciation of the cultural context
physically-oriented adaptability	Can operate in multiple physical environments

Table 1. Eight Dimension Model of Adaptive Performance

For Army leaders, each of these aspects of adaptive performance is important but interpersonal adaptability, adaptive problem solving, and cultural adaptability seem most important for the operational environment of the 21st century. The Army must identify what behaviors are desired before developmental or educational strategies can be devised.

From this multi-dimensional model, adaptive performance requires an ability to scan the environment, recognize important items in the environment that have changed, evaluate alternatives or options available to contend with changes in the environment, change behavior, and finally evaluate outcomes[15]. There is clearly a strong cognitive aspect to all forms of adaptive performance. Dorsey, et al. contend that adaptive performance is an elusive construct that up to this point has not been adequately examined. There are aspects of adaptive performance that vary by individual due to innate differences, but other aspects can be developed.

Dorsey, et al. developed a program for Special Forces officers designed to provide instruction in and application of techniques to improve adaptive performance[16]. This program included activities designed to improve several aspects of adaptive

performance to include cognitive ability to recognize changes in patterns and situations and increase mental adaptability, activities to increase an individual's openness to new ideas, activities to increase an individual's resiliency in the face of setbacks, activities to increase one's tolerance for ambiguity, and techniques for leading an adaptable team. Elements of the instruction included case studies, lectures and exercises. The authors contend that although adaptive performance is a complex process with multiple components, there are aspects that can be developed and enhanced such as mental adaptability and interpersonal adaptability. This is where further research is needed. For Army leaders, which elements of adaptive performance are most important and what are the best means to develop these? It is likely that at different ranks or in different duty positions, these elements become more or less important.

The study's authors discuss the development of adaptive performance in terms of behavioral flexibility, the ability and willingness to change plans, and actions based on changes in the environment. This behavioral flexibility comes from an individual's experiences and the scope of their domain knowledge in a given area. The authors call for exposing leaders to a wide variety of situations that expand domain knowledge and behavioral flexibility. Essential to this is an iterative process of exposure, practice, and feedback.

There is evidence of the validity of the 8 factor model of adaptive performance developed by Dorsey, et al. Researchers at Fort Benning's Army Research Institute field office conducted a study using both officer and non-commissioned officer combat veterans attending both the Infantry Captains Career Course and the Infantry Basic and Advanced Non-Commissioned Officers Courses. They also interviewed officers and

non-commissioned officers during a rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center. Subjects described situations where they as individuals or their unit responded adaptively. The authors found that the model accounted for all the adaptive behaviors recalled by the subjects[17].

The participants were asked to provide recommendations on training techniques to improve individual and unit adaptive performance. Subjects recommended training where the mission changes so that leaders are required to use commander's intent to determine new courses of action. They also advocated training where leaders are taken out of the scenario requiring subordinates to step up and take charge. Other high payoff training requires leaders and units to show restraint in stressful scenarios, the conditions change unexpectedly, leaders must negotiate with noncombatants and the training reinforces the importance of cultural awareness and foreign language proficiency. The authors propose further research using this construct for adaptive performance with different populations and contexts[18].

Research has also been done within the civilian domain using the above construct on adaptive performance. Pulakos, Dorsey and White conducted a content analysis from over one thousand incidents from different professions requiring adaptive performance also confirming the construct[19]. What remains now is for the Army to identify which components are most important and focus research on ways to develop this in others. Some of this research is occurring with emphasis on the cognitive aspects of adaptive performance.

John Wyszynski defines adaptive leadership as "the capacity to recognize and respond to changing situations within the operational environment and to take steps to

maintain the initiative and dictate the terms of the operation"[20]. Wyszynski's

components of adaptive leadership include self-awareness, understanding your

adversary, taking intelligent risks and looking for opportunities to exploit, mental agility,

and strength of character. Critical in Wyszynski's notion of adaptive leadership is the

ability to anticipate events, particularly enemy, in order to force the enemy to respond to

your actions. This ability comes through experienced-based training and intuition.

There has been considerable research into formal experience-based training to develop

better cognitive processes and intuitive decision making related to adaptive

performance.

Cognitive Skills Training for Adaptability

The Army Research Institute (ARI) has done work in the area of adaptive

performance in battle command[21]. ARI's thesis is that adaptive thinking is an active

process and that you can train this process for increased performance. They rely on

previous research done on the acquisition of expert behavior in other domains to

develop methods of improving adaptive performance. They define adaptive thinking as

"the cognitive process of being confronted with unanticipated events during the

execution of military operations and developing requisite responses"[22]. ARI developed

eight Themes of Battlefield Thinking used by tactical experts. It is beyond the scope of

this paper to describe the themes in detail. They then conducted research with novices

introducing these themes and exposed novices over time to repeated novel scenarios.

They found evidence that subjects became more adept at using these themes to adapt

to new scenarios. Key to their training is introduction to the themes, exposure to a new

scenario, think aloud protocols where the subject analyzes the situation in the presence

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of a trained observer who asks probing questions and asks the student to identify key considerations, and adaptive responses. The goal is improving the students' analysis of novel situations and rapidly devising practical solutions.

From this work, the ARI unit at Fort Knox developed an automated tool to train adaptive thinking called Think Like a Commander (TLAC)[23]. In several studies with students at the Captains Career Course, ARI has been successful in demonstrating increased cognitive performance dealing with novel tactical scenarios after exposure to training on the Themes of Battlefield Thinking. Success at improving adaptive thinking using TLAC does require certain levels of domain knowledge but ARI's contention is that domain knowledge alone does not guarantee adaptive thinking. You must couple domain knowledge with repetitive exposure to novel situations. ARI is convinced of the utility of their TLAC training and TLAC is now being used within the Maneuver Captain's Career Course at both Fort Benning and Fort Knox[24]. "Expert adaptive thinking under stressful performance conditions requires considerable training and extensive practice in realistic conditions until the leaders' thinking processes become largely automatic"[25]. ARI describes this as a sort of cognitive battle drill[26].

There certainly are limitations to this approach though. The themes taught may not be appropriate for all situations, especially if a similar program is designed for operational and strategic leaders. Also, this training focuses on evaluating a situation using the eight themes. It does not allow for addition of new considerations. It also requires a trained coach who can observe and ask probing questions to force the student to verbalize their thought process.   It also tends to isolate one decision as representing adaptive performance where in a more naturalistic environment, it is much

more complex. There are a series of tasks to be done and multiple assessments and decisions to be made.

Nonetheless, there is great value in developing adaptive thinking in leaders prior to operational assignments or as a part of a leader development program during an operational assignment. In fact in an ARI study completed with TLAC, a majority of subjects commented that TLAC would have been very useful preparation prior to operational deployments[27]. I concur with the ARI view, "to adequately prepare leaders, we must make efficient use of opportunities to improve the skills associated with decision making by conducting focused, deliberate practice in battlefield thinking skills"[28]. The goal of the training is to develop expert performance in leaders. With experience, the thinking becomes more routine thus requiring less cognitive resources. These resources can then be devoted to other tasks. Experts are also able to use their domain knowledge more flexibly[29].

The previous two sections demonstrate that adaptive performance is a complex behavior with multiple components. For Army leaders, adaptively dealing with uncertainty, interpersonal adaptability, adaptive problem solving, and cultural adaptability seem most important for the operational environment of the 21st century. There is ample evidence that at least for adaptive problem solving, this behavior can be enhanced. The Army needs to expand its use of programs like TLAC to better develop adaptive thinking in its leaders. More research will need to be done in the other component areas of adaptive performance to see if the Army can develop educational or training approaches to develop those aspects of adaptive performance as well. In

order to truly examine how best to develop adaptive performance, the Army must also consider organizational and cultural factors that contribute to adaptive performance.

Organizational & Cultural Perspectives

Donald Vandergriff argues that the Army's entire leader development doctrine is antiquated and based on industrial age notions. In *Raising the Bar- Creating and Nurturing Adaptability to Deal with the Changing Face of War*, Vandergriff presents his ideas on how to modify the Army's leader development system to place a premium on adaptability[30]. Vandergriff argues that the Army's current leader development system is tied to the current Army culture which actually diminishes adaptability in individuals and institutions. Vandergriff proposes the Adaptive Course Model (ACM) as a revolutionary change to leader development to contend with our nations' new adversaries who employ 4GW as described earlier.

Vandergriff describes an adaptive leader as one who is: intuitive (this allows rapid decision making); a critical thinker; a creative thinker; self-aware; and socially adept . "Someone who is adaptive can think of solutions to complex problems in chaotic, unpredictable situations that are based more on intuition than on analysis, deliberate planning, and doctrine"[31]. Vandergriff is in favor of more naturalistic decision making experiences similar to what ARI advocates. Experience builds knowledge for increased intuitive decision making. According to Vandergriff, developing adaptive leaders should be the primary goal of leader development. " Developing adaptability or how to think, must come to dominate the education, training, and selection of future leaders[32]".

Vandergriff contends that our current leader development system rewards individual performance versus organizational effectiveness or subordinate development.

This then leads to micromanagement and suppressed initiative of subordinates. "As commanders must operate under a top down, zero defects environment, they compensate for their junior leaders through micromanagement"[33]. This micromanagement is indicative of a lack of trust. This leads to very centralized, rigid organizations, according to Vandergriff, that limit the creative and intellectual talents of subordinate leaders.

The purpose of the ACM is to develop leaders who understand and practice adaptive performance. Leaders learn to: differentiate between useful and distracting information in the operating environment; avoid temptations to delay decisions waiting for additional information; avoid thinking that once the mission begins, more information will become available shedding light on the tactical situation.

The ACM exposes students to various situations using case studies, tactical decision games or vignettes, and force on force training all intended to build intuition through experiential learning. Students learn to operate and become comfortable with uncertainty. Students are encouraged to explore and experiment in a safe environment. The emphasis from the teachers is on better critical and reflective thinking. "Accomplishing this change in educational approach stands in contrast to established beliefs regarding teaching the basics through rote memorization of the technical aspect of the profession also known as task training. This new model starts with developing the leader which is the hard part, and then introduces the technical knowledge later, once the leader knows how to think"[34].

There is a lot of current attention focused on the ACM. Vandergriff was recently asked by Army Magazine to write a three-part series outlining his ACM[35]. Perhaps the

attention and interest are because most leaders recognize the importance of adaptive performance, but lack ideas on how to achieve it in others. The ACM is an interesting concept that the Army should consider more fully. I see aspects of it that can be applied within the operational Army as well as the institutional Army. In the institutional training base, one of the challenges with incorporating elements of the ACM will be balancing the requirement to train domain-specific tasks with adaptive performance. I believe you can do both and they complement each other.

As Vandergriff argues, a cultural change is required to create more agile leaders and agile units. As a retired Army colonel said to the Army War College Class of 2008 recently, as the Army's new strategic leaders, they are responsible for the Army's culture. "Cultural change begins with behavior and the leaders who shape it"[36]. It will be up to senior leaders to ensure that adaptive performance is valued and developed within the culture. To do this, there needs to be a discussion of the importance of adaptive performance by practitioners and theorists, as well as ideas on how to promote it. This discussion will lead to a shared vision of effective leaders and effective units with adaptive performance as a center piece of this vision. There are authors informing this discussion.

David Fastabend and Robert Simpson call for an Army culture of innovation[37]. They argue that the Army must encourage and reward adaptive or innovative behaviors in its leaders and units and encourage experimentation at all levels. A culture that allows failure and the ability to reflect, learn, and try new practices must be developed. This culture must also accept and learn to thrive on uncertainty. They describe this culture of innovation:

The organization as a whole is agile, ready to learn, continually changing and improving. This organization is fast, flexible, and never prepared to say 'we have finished getting better'. Innovative organizations depend less on forecasting, planning, and control, and more on scanning, agility, and feedback. Innovative organizations embrace uncertainty, recognizing that an uncertain future potentially holds as many opportunities as it does threats[38].

Many contend that the current operational environment requires adaptive performance, but many of our peacetime systems hinder it and studies verify this.

In a 2002 study, Leonard Wong examined from the perspective of captains, whether the Army valued innovation in its leaders. Similar to results found in the ATLDP, Wong found that junior officers did not believe they were given adequate opportunities to be innovative[39]. There was substantial direction from higher headquarters as to what and how training was conducted, as well as many last minute changes and distracters dictated from above. This leads to reaction vice deliberate, proactive thought on the part of subordinate leaders within an organization, according to Wong. It would be interesting to do a follow-up to this study now. Even with the recognition of the importance of adaptive performance, with the limited dwell time units have between deployments, and the number of mandated training events, are we allowing adequate time for junior leaders to exercise proactive, adaptive thought?

Wong conducted related research with junior leaders in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in 2004 and found that the Army's junior leaders, because of OIF, developed into creative, adaptive leaders because of what he called the "crucible experience" of OIF[40]. Wong argues that the Army needs to leverage this crucible experience for the continued development of our future strategic leaders. Wong argues that although combat requires adaptive performance, our peacetime Army often stymies adaptive performance. He argues for more independence in garrison for our junior leaders in

developing and conducting training and for their continued exposure to complex and ambiguous training environments with cultural dynamics at play, restrictive rules of engagement, etc. Less academic in their approach, but no less insightful, several practitioners address organizational and cultural factors that affect adaptive performance.

Colonel Robert Brown discusses the agile leader mindset[41]. According to Brown, the agile leader mindset requires a command climate that values challenging training, empowered leaders allowed to act independently and with initiative within the commander's intent, and a horizontal versus vertical organization that rapidly shares information and analysis. This command climate must value and practice mission orders, decentralized planning and execution, and making pertinent information available to all who may need it. In terms of training, Brown calls for taking leaders out of their comfort zone and creating as much uncertainty and friction as possible. He calls for creative training scenarios that infuse huge amounts of information on leaders.   The agile leader mindset is established first by the strategic leader's actions, followed by buy- in from subordinates as they experience better effectiveness due to this command climate.

Similar to Brown, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Hickey wrote an article in Military Review about the importance of developing the judgment of subordinates[42].   "I recognized that my trust in their judgment, the faith that they could and would make the right decisions, was key to our success"[43]. The key to establishing this trust was the command climate. "I believe that a command climate that builds initiative, and one that focuses on developing critical thinking skills so that leaders at all levels have not only

the knowledge and training but also the judgment to make the right decisions" is critical according to Hickey[44]. It is clear that Hickey valued and encouraged initiative and the use of innovative solutions to problems. With this also comes acceptance that mistakes will sometimes occur. To Hickey, developing subordinates' decision making should be the focus of leader development prior to deployment. "Better to gain experience from bad judgment during training than during combat"[45].

To address this re-emphasis on adaptive performance, in addition to further study of the components of adaptive performance and how to develop those in leaders, I believe the Army needs to re-examine its underlying cultural assumptions that relate to adaptive performance and then examine our systems and processes to see if they are congruent with our values and assumptions. My experience is that they are often divergent. Others concur. "The culture needs to change to be based more on a learning- based model where the best and most valued ideas in the room may come from the junior person"[46].

A comprehensive approach towards adaptive performance will need to be developed across the three domains of leader development-institutional, operational, and self-development. The Army recognizes this. In 2006, the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Army commissioned the Review of Education, Training and Assignments for Leaders (RETAL) study[47]. The study found that the current leader development model is effective at producing innovative leaders but has not kept up with changes in the operational environment. The study determined that the Army needs multi-skilled leaders for the 21st century. The RETAL study addressed aspects of adaptive performance to include competent decision making, strategic thinking, and innovation[48].

Currently the Army is continuing its work on revising leader development programs to better prepare leaders for the demands of the 21st century. The 21st Century Army Leader program recently identified the requisite leader knowledge, skills, and attributes (KSA). These include mental agility, sound judgment, interpersonal tact, innovation, strategic & creative thinking, all related to aspects of adaptive performance[49]. From these KSA, the effort aims to revise institutional leader development, adapt the personnel system, and develop collective training strategies to enhance leader development. Some potential options include increased opportunities for graduate school to better develop critical and strategic thinkers, expanded knowledge management networks to share best practices, implementation of a 360 degree leader feedback system, development of a life-long learning strategy for officers and non-commissioned officers, increased opportunities to serve in joint/interagency/intergovernmental/multinational (JIIM) assignments and others. Some of these efforts are underway, others are in concept only.

This is an exciting time as it appears that there is momentum from the current Army leadership to ensure that as a part of our transformation efforts, the Army also transforms its leader development programs to better prepare leaders for the challenges of the 21st century operational environment. Adaptive performance is a critical aspect of this transformation.

Conclusion

Adaptive performance is an effective change in response to an altered situation. This can be a cognitive change in terms of how we solve problems but it can also be a

change in interpersonal style as we act with other members of units, members of different government agencies or the people of different cultures during operations.

The Army needs to identify the critical aspects of adaptive performance, clearly define these components in our leader and training doctrine, and then conduct more applied research on best practices in developing adaptive performance in both leaders and units. This paper provides considerable support for cognitive training programs to build intuition like TLAC or the ACM. I believe this is incredibly important in developing adaptive performance in leaders. Leaders need to be exposed to novel situations and incrementally placed under greater pressures and levels of ambiguity in a risk-free environment. After action reviews and developmental feedback needs to focus on why decisions were made and what factors were considered when making decisions.

The institutional domain can capitalize on tactical decision exercises, constructive simulations and situational training exercises to develop adaptive performance. In terms of evaluation, less emphasis should be placed on achieving prescribed tasks, conditions, and standards taken out of mission training plans or doctrine. Instead, emphasis should be on achieving the desired end state articulated in the higher commander's intent.

This training needs to receive more emphasis than domain-specific training. There is not sufficient time within either the institutional or operational domains to train on all desired tasks. Senior leaders or course managers need to be creative in selecting high payoff tasks and emphasizing problem solving. The other area where the institutional domain can contribute to adaptive performance is a better use of lessons learned by highly qualified personnel. The Army needs to place increased emphasis on

selecting only the best, most successful leaders for training positions. These leaders should come off of a combat deployment and rotate into the training base to share their lessons and experiences. We did this at the Infantry Captains Career Course with great success.

It is imperative that senior leaders in operational units and staffs understand the importance of adaptive performance, reinforce it, and then develop leader development programs that foster it. Adaptive performance needs to be addressed within the strategic leader's vision for the organization. Every training and development opportunity is an opportunity to enhance adaptive performance if the senior leader is creative and proactive. Senior leaders need to develop their subordinates to become comfortable in uncertain environments. This requires a command climate of trust and less emphasis on detailed, deliberate planning. Senior leaders must be able to communicate their intent clearly, use mission orders to allow maximum subordinate freedom of action and innovation, and then encourage initiative and experimentation and allow mistakes to occur. Senior leaders need to encourage cross-talk among subordinates to share best practices and de-emphasize competition. Senior leaders need to value and seek out diverse opinions and encourage candid feedback and differing views. Senior leaders can't micromanage. They need to delegate both authority and responsibility. Senior leaders need to take risks and model adaptive performance, as well as de-emphasize higher headquarters rigid control of all aspects of operations.

I also believe the Army needs to provide more assignment opportunities earlier in an officer's career for JIIM experiences and provide more graduate school opportunities.

The best time to begin this is post company command. The risk incurred is that these officers will lack certain tactical or technical skills that they traditionally receive. The payoff of officers with a diverse, expanded skill set that expands their adaptive performance far outweighs the risk.

A final recommendation would be to modify the Officer Evaluation Report and the Junior Officer Developmental Support Form to include adaptive performance as a leader attribute. This would serve as a forcing function for senior leaders to look for and reward adaptive performance in subordinates and to include adaptive performance in all developmental counseling.

The Army recognizes the importance of adaptive performance in its Soldiers, leaders, and units. Recognition is not enough to ensure that culturally, we adapt this important trait and that our strategic leaders understand how to develop it in others. Much has been done over the last seven years to improve adaptive performance. More needs to be done to study effective strategies for enhancing adaptive performance, to incorporate those into our institutional and operational leader development programs, and educate our strategic leaders as to their responsibilities. Our Soldiers and our nation deserve this.

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